

NEWS RELEASE

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PowerForward Targets “Shaving the Peak”

Governor Leavitt Encourages Utahns to Stay Cool the Energy-Efficient Way

Governor Mike Leavitt today officially kicked off PowerForward’s third summer campaign calling on Utah consumers to reduce electricity demand during peak hours of the day. The campaign unites Utah citizens, utilities, businesses, and government in a sustained public information campaign to promote an ethic of conservation and efficient energy use.

“Reducing the peak demand is an economic imperative if we want to maintain affordable electricity rates for our citizens and businesses in the future,” said Governor Leavitt. “Energy conservation is a key component of our 1000-Day Economic Plan.”

Utahns’ demand for summer peak electricity, which is the most expensive electricity supplied, has grown at twice the rate of overall demand in recent years. Residential cooling is the largest contributor to Utah’s growing peak power demand.

“This is a community effort and I am calling on utilities, consumers and businesses to find no-cost and low-cost ways to reduce the amount of electricity needed to cool our homes and businesses this summer,” said Leavitt. “I’m asking citizens to take voluntary steps to keep our energy prices low.”

PowerForward partners identified several ways consumers can help “shave the peak” demand for power. A significant tool is the load management device, provided by Utah Power’s “Cool Keeper” program. Utah Power provides a cash incentive for people to voluntarily allow the company to install load management devices on their central air conditioning unit outside their home. When peak demand reductions are needed, Utah Power will cycle the participant’s air conditioning unit off for brief periods, lasting up to 15 minutes every half hour.

“This is an extremely important strategy to help us manage the peak,” Bill Landels, Vice President of Utah Power, said. “For those who volunteer to participate, we have designed this program to minimize the inconvenience and ensure that homes will not become uncomfortably warm during the time your air conditioning has been cycled off.”

Leavitt also identified programmable thermostats as another strategy homeowners can use to reduce electricity needed to cool homes during peak hours. Each degree setting above 72 degrees reduces electricity use of your central air conditioning system by 3 percent.

Energy efficient cooling systems are one of the best ways to cut back electricity demand. Evaporative cooling is the most cost-efficient way to cool homes, but even if central air is used, consumers are encouraged to purchase units with “Energy Star” labels and the highest seasonal energy efficiency rating.

The Governor reactivated the PowerForward alert network for the summer of 2003. This system notifies consumers through green, yellow and red alerts of days and times when wholesale electricity prices are high.

“Right now, Utah’s power system is in good condition,” Leavitt observed. “Our utilities have planned ahead for this summer’s electricity supplies and our rates remain among the lowest in the nation. But it is still in our long term economic and financial interest to be vigilant and prepared to conserve electricity when unexpected problems arise in our electricity system.”

Last summer, Utahns conserved an average of 90 megawatts on each of 11 declared “yellow” days. Ninety megawatts is enough power to supply nearly 45,000 houses – about 12 percent of all households in the state – for a day.

The PowerForward energy conservation campaign was established by Governor Leavitt in response to the 2000/2001 western electricity crises and has become an element of the Governor’s “1000 Day Economic Plan”.

For more information on the PowerForward program, please contact the Utah Energy Office at (801) 538-4761 or visit the PowerForward website at www.powerforward.utah.gov.

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